

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

VLR - 6/14/00 NRHP - 8/2/00

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Reid-White-Philbin House
other names/site number Evergreen House; VDHR file no. 117-0014

2. Location

street & number 208 West Nelson Street N/A not for publication
city or town Lexington N/A vicinity
state Virginia code VA county Lexington (Indep. City) code 678 zip code 24450

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] 6/29/2000
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service

I hereby certify that this property is:

	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<u> </u> entered in the National Register.	_____	_____
<u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<u> </u> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<u> </u> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<u> </u> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<u> </u> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**2**6. Function or Use****Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Category	Subcategory
DOMESTIC	single dwelling
DOMESTIC	secondary structure

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Federal

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Limestone
walls	Brick
roof	Copper
other	Wood

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTUREEDUCATION**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Reid, Samuel McDowell**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past fifty years.

Period of SignificanceCa. 1750-1869**Significant Dates**1821Ca. 1847**Cultural Affiliation**N/A**Architect/Builder**Reid, Samuel McDowell (architect)Sewell, Edward (carpenter)**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☒ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
VA-955
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
#

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Washington and Lee University

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property approximately 2.5 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone Easting Northing	Zone Easting Northing
1	17 636860 4182950	3 17
2	17	4 17

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>J. Daniel Pezzoni</u>	date	<u>February 23, 2000</u>
organization	<u>Landmark Preservation Associates</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 464-5315</u>
street & number	<u>6 Houston St.</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>		

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name	<u>B/Gen. Tobias R. Philbin, Jr., and Anne S. Philbin</u>		
street & number	<u>208 W. Nelson St. (PO Box 101)</u>	telephone	<u>(540) 463-3993</u>
city or town	<u>Lexington</u> state <u>VA</u>	zip code	<u>24450</u>

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Reid-White-Philbin House
Lexington, Va.**

Section number 7 Page 1

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Summary

The Reid-White-Philbin House stands at 208 West Nelson Street in the Lexington Historic District, which is listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. The two-story Flemish-bond brick house was begun in 1821 to a design and specifications drafted by its original owner, Samuel McDowell Reid, and executed by builder Edward Sewell (see Exhibit A). The Federal-style residence features an early entry porch supported by Ionic columns, a basement of coursed limestone rubble laid in mortar and approximately thirty inches in thickness, unusual three-part windows, and a parapet gable roof modified in the late antebellum period. About 1847 a two-story brick addition was made to the left-hand gable end, graced by a two-tier front portico and a post-bellum conservatory with bay window. To the rear extends a story-and-a-half gabled kitchen wing of stone construction, a pre-existing dwelling that probably dates to the second half of the eighteenth century. All roofing is standing-seam copper.

The interior of the 1821 section has a modified double-pile plan with four rooms radiating off of an entry hall. Notable features of this section include a barrel-vaulted entry hall ceiling, Federal and Georgian-inspired mantels, wide hinged and pocket doorways made between the rooms in the mid-nineteenth century, and secondary partitions with interior construction of lapped chestnut planks. The ca. 1847 addition features conventional Greek Revival details and the stone kitchen wing retains a hall-parlor plan and a Georgian mantel. Standing near the house are a two-part antebellum brick dependency thought to have served in part as a slave quarter, and a modernized early-twentieth-century carriage house.

The shady 2.5-acre lot occupies the crest of the same ridge on which the antebellum buildings at Washington and Lee University stand. Directly in front of the house--in fact, occupying its former front yard--is the Lexington Post Office, a Classical Revival building of brick and Indiana limestone erected in 1911-13. A row of substantial nineteenth-century brick houses extends to the southwest of the Reid-White-Philbin House, and historic residential, commercial, and institutional buildings occupy other nearby lots.

Inventory

1. Reid-White-Philbin House. 2nd half 18th c.; 1821-22; ca. 1847; 1959; 1975-1985. Contributing building.
2. Dependency. Early to mid-19th c. Contributing building.
3. Carriage house. Ca. 1910; ca. 1980. Noncontributing building.

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Reid-White-Philbin House
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Description (continued)

Exterior

The front (southeast) elevation of the Reid-White-Philbin House has apparently changed little since the earliest known photograph of the residence, a view dated 1867-70 in the Special Collections of Washington and Lee University's Leyburn Library that shows the house and its surroundings in the distance. The right-hand 1821 section and the ca. 1847 left-hand section had achieved their present basic appearance, with only the construction of a one-story conservatory on the southwest end of the addition occurring later, during the latter third of the nineteenth century. The focal point of the symmetrical three-bay 1821 facade is a one-story entry porch which is not depicted or referenced in Reid's plans but was likely built at the same time as the section or shortly thereafter. The porch is raised on a platform of tooled sandstone blocks (with replacement limestone blocks intermixed) and reached by stone steps with molded treads, recent iron railings, and mortises for the original iron railing supports. The porch stands on four stone columns on tooled stone bases that are capped by simple Ionic capitals carved from sandstone, with flat Ionic wood pilasters against the house wall. The columns have scars ascribed to damage that occurred during Hunter's Raid in 1864, when shells landed around the house (see historic context). The form of some of the marks are consistent with damage caused by shell fragments, and others of round pitted form have been found to have traces of lead, supporting the tradition that they were created by miniballs. Other features of the porch include a beaded matchboard ceiling, recent iron railings, a recent pendant lantern-type light fixture, and a recent wood Chinese Chippendale roof-top balustrade that replaces a nineteenth-century balustrade of similar form (although perhaps not the same style).

The porch shelters a front entry with sidelights and an elliptical fanlight. The six-panel door is flanked by fluted colonnettes engaged only at their molded bases and caps, which support a cornice with a punched fringe-like molding. If Reid's watercolor elevation is to be taken literally, he intended the door panels to be painted white, the rails and stiles brown, and the woodwork of the surround itself ocher. The fanlight has delicate muntins that radiate from a central sunburst boss. The threshold is formed by a finely tooled and shaped sandstone block. Opening onto the balcony above the first-story entry is a second entry apparently adapted from an original window. The three-part windows have nine-over-nine sash on the first story, six-over-six sash on the second story, and three-over-three sidelights on both stories. The first-story windows have stuccoed splayed lintels, painted white in recent years. Below the first story windows, and corresponding to them in position on the front and rear elevations, are basement windows under segmental arches. These have sash behind horizontal wood-barred vents (the "Bar frames" in Reid's specifications). The tops of these vent-windows mark the transition from course limestone

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Description (continued)

rubble below to pencilled Flemish-bond brick above.

Reid's elevation and section drawings depict a conventional gable roof with four gable-end brick chimneys and apparently projecting brick cornices. In the late antebellum period this original scheme was changed; the brick gable ends were continued up to form parapets, and wide friezes (painted white by the late 1860s) were added to the tops of the front and rear elevations. The chimneys project slightly from the gable ends and feature stepped shoulders with stepping also on chimney faces, an unusual treatment. Each gable features a double-sash window, and concrete steps lead down to a paneled wood basement door at the back corner of the northeast gable end.

The pencilled brickwork of the ca. 1847 addition features stretcher-header courses every five stretcher courses. The portico has paneled square wood columns, Chinese Chippendale railings on both tiers, and beaded flush-board ceilings, all the woodwork painted white. The brick floor and steps date to the 1970s restoration. A door opening onto the lower tier has a decorative transom. Extending from the end of the addition is a one-story conservatory of pencilled six-course American-bond brick with a bay window containing four-over-four double-hung sash. The conservatory's rear elevation featured a bank of windows opening onto a rose garden; these were lost in 1959 when a one-story kitchen was added. The stretcher-bond-veneer kitchen has six-over-six sash windows and a rear-facing counter-height bow window.

The eighteenth-century stone wing connects to the back of the ca. 1847 addition by a two-story stone and brick hyphen, the upper brick section later than the lower stone section. The stone wing has six-over-nine windows on the first story, six-light windows in the upper story, a recent six-panel door in a historic pegged surround with a three-light transom, an interior end chimney, and beaded rake boards.

Interior

The 1821 plan and details are still very much evident on the interior of the house. Reid's plan (see Exhibit B) depicts a set of four rectangular rooms, two small front rooms and two larger second-pile rooms, connected to a front entry hall. These spaces have twelve-foot-high ceilings. The left-hand front room contains the stair. Alterations to this original plan occurred in the mid-nineteenth century when large doorways were inserted in the walls between the three non-stair rooms, and about 1959 when the stair was changed and partitions were added throughout to convert the home into a fraternity house. During the restoration carried out by the present owners the front stair was returned to its original position as shown in Reid's drawing.

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Lexington, Va.

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Description (continued)

The characteristic finishes of the house are first seen in the front entry hall, which has wood floors and plastered wall and ceiling finishes (floors throughout the house are original). As Reid specified, the hall and other rooms are "dadoed . . . with wash board and capping"; that is, they have flush-board wainscots with baseboards and chairrails. Originally the hall ceiling was flat, as in all the other rooms of the house, but in 1826 Sarah Reid had an arched ceiling added below the flat one at a cost of \$6.20 (original green paint survives above the arched ceiling). Four doorways open into the other downstairs rooms, each hung with reproduction six-panel doors. The home's reproduction doors have stained finishes to conform with the original treatments, whereas the surviving original doors are either painted or stained. The original lock boxes, which were removed from the house prior to the restoration, have been replaced with antique locks that match the originals in size and placement. The doorways have molded surrounds with turned corner blocks with center buttons. All the surrounds are original except one replica.

The hall's right-hand door leads into a small front room that Reid may have intended for his office; he specified a "plain" mantel for it (his emphasis), and its size and location would have been convenient for office use. The room has a conventional Federal mantel with reeded pilasters and end blocks in the frieze with unembellished elliptical panels. The fireplace has a recent surround of dark gray slate; most of the fireplaces in the house have recent marble surrounds in various hues. All of the home's ten fireplaces and six chimneys are now fully functional. The present fireplace surrounds replace gray marble surrounds which had either been broken and removed or sold separately in 1959 with the home's furnishings. Between the small front room and the large one adjoining is a wide doorway with a pair of hinged double-leaf panel doors and an arched tympanum divided into two panels and surmounted by a molded keystone-like motif. The design of this opening suggests it was made in the mid-nineteenth century, at the same time other major modifications were made to the dwelling.

Reid described the adjoining room, the large right-hand second-pile room, as a drawing room. For this room and the other second-pile room Reid specified "mouldings planted on 2 fancy chimney pieces." The drawing room mantel features fluted half-round pilasters, a tall bed molding, fluted tablets at the ends of the frieze, and a center frieze tablet with an elliptical panel and fan-motif corners. The Federal eagle design in the center tablet is a replacement. Between this room and the other second-pile room is a mid-nineteenth-century doorway with paneled pocket doors.

The other second-pile room, described as a dining room in Reid's specifications, features a mantel with pilasters and basic frieze form similar to that of the drawing room mantel, but with

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Description (continued)

horizontal fluting in the center and end frieze tablets. Flanking the chimney in Reid's plan and sections are two cupboards, presumably for the storage of food items and dinnerware. When the ca. 1847 addition to the house was made a window on one side of the chimney became an open-faced display cabinet and the other cupboard was converted into a doorway leading to a back stair hall (see description of ca. 1847 addition below). Another notable feature of the room is an ornate plaster ceiling medallion with a center circular element and four triangular extensions; this feature probably dates to the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

The remaining first-floor room of the 1821 section is the main stair hall, reached by the left-hand door of the front entry hall. Originally the stair had a two-run configuration with the longer upper run rising across the front window, and it was returned to this original arrangement in 1983 during the restoration. Features include slender turned newel posts and balusters, ramped and eased circular-section hand rails, and simple curved tread end brackets. Reid called for "Stairs clean laid, with ramp and knee rail" in his specifications, and he directed that the stairs to the basement run under them (presently the basement is reached by a stair in the ca. 1840 addition).

The second floor is similar to the first in plan except that there is presently no analogue to the front entry hall. Reid's section drawings show a room in the same location as the entry hall below, but no architectural evidence has been uncovered to suggest that a room was ever created. There is a fireplace with a simple Georgian-inspired architrave mantel at the southwest end of the second-floor stair hall, which historically served as a sewing room. Reid specified mantels "in middleing style" for the second-floor spaces, and the three mantels plus the one in the stair hall are in fact less ornate than those on the first floor. The two in the second-floor bedrooms (one of which is now used as a library) are Federal in inspiration with recessed and molded panels in the pilaster faces and in the blocks at the ends of the friezes. The mantel in the smaller front room is similar to the one in the stair hall. Near the top of the stair from the first floor another stair with a closed stringer, an unusual slender turned newel post, and rectangular-section balusters rises to the attic.

Visible in the semi-finished attic are straight-sawn rafters and collar beams, the former lapped at the ridge, the latter lapped and nailed to the rafters. Two partitions form a small hall-like space at the top of the stair from the second floor; these partitions are constructed of overlapping vertical chestnut planks, a construction technique also employed for the non-masonry interior walls on the lower floors. Finishes include molded door and window surrounds, sections of beaded chairrail affixed to the exposed brick gable-end walls, and a beaded batten door with a

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Description (continued)

wood lock box. The two-brick thickness of the exterior walls of the second story and attic are most apparent here; the first story exterior walls are three bricks thick.

The basement, which extends only under the 1821 section of the house (crawlspaces are under the other sections), is characterized by exposed stone walls (painted white), a concrete floor laid over the original brick floor, scattered decorative finishes such as a beaded door surround and a section of chairrail, and a ceiling of plaster over circular-sawn lath. The joists above the plaster-and-lath are whitewashed. The basement was used for parties during fraternity house period; a wooden bar and a raised stage for a band survive from this use.

The interior of the ca. 1847 addition features Greek Revival detail such as simple door surrounds with concave profiles and blank corner blocks, and a first-floor mantel with fluted pilasters, cyma pilaster caps, and a pedimented backband above the shelf. The back stair to the second floor has slender turned newel posts, rectangular-section banisters, and beaded flush-board sheathing in the spandrel. The late-nineteenth-century conservatory has window surrounds to match those in the ca. 1847 addition, as does its 1959 rear extension, which served as a cook's apartment. The present kitchen to the rear was designed and constructed in 1975 in the original space of the 1959 fraternity kitchen which later (after 1959) had been gutted and converted into a double bedroom. The ca. 1847 addition's second floor features one large bedroom with a Georgian architrave surround rescued from a building demolished in downtown Lexington, and augmented with additional moldings. The second-floor bathroom formerly served as the main bathroom of the fraternity house, with multiple showers, commodes, and urinals. It has now been considerably gentrified.

At the back of the ca. 1847 addition's first-floor stair hall a batten door leads into a foyer that connects the original stone house with the other sections. The foyer's recent flagstone floor is several feet below the level of the front sections of the house, therefore it is reached by a set of steps provided with a Chippendale-style iron railing of recent manufacture. The foyer's outside entry has an original beaded batten door hung on unusual iron strap hinges with circular swellings near the pintels. The other two batten doors were fabricated for the restoration. All three doors have three-light transoms.

The original stone house has a hall-parlor plan, the hall with its massive stone cooking fireplace later used as a kitchen when the 1821 section was built. The fireplace has a wood mantel shelf and a modern glass-fronted insert, but it retains its old iron crane. Rising along the hall-parlor wall (the parlor analogue has been made into a passageway and water closet) is a single-run

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Description (continued)

closed-stringer stair with a plank railing and simple square-section newel post with later reinforcing. Other features of the first floor include book shelves flanking the chimney, doors with salvaged antique wood lock boxes, and plain and molded door and window surrounds. The dominant feature on the second floor is the tapering and stuccoed mass of the chimney, which has a small fireplace and a Georgian architrave mantel with some replacement moldings.

Outbuildings and Landscape Features

The dependency (slave quarter) stands several feet beyond the conservatory and the ca. 1959 fraternity addition (the present kitchen). It is constructed of two similarly-sized five-course American-bond units joined under a metal-sheathed gable roof with weatherboarded gables. The brickwork is thought to consist of discarded bricks and bricks left over from the construction of the 1821 house. In the nineteenth century the dependency had a two-bay frame second story with light-colored siding, probably weatherboards. The second story is evident in the 1867-70 photograph and was removed between 1920 and 1926, according to Sanborn maps. The south unit has a narrow side window with a beaded surround and horizontal wood bars, the latter detail suggestive of a historic function as a meat house or dairy. Other exterior features include beaded batten doors, a nineteenth-century six-over-six window and a twentieth-century eight-over-eight window, and a stone foundation under the north unit. A small patio with basketweave brick pavement extends to the south. The interior features plaster-on-brick walls, plasterboard ceilings, and concrete floors. A brick chimney on the northwest wall of the north unit has a simple board mantel of domestic character that lends support to the tradition that the dependency also functioned as a slave dwelling.

The carriage house appears to be present in the first Sanborn map that depicts the property (1913) and is definitely present by 1926. The building was converted to an automobile garage by 1926, at which time it was briefly appended to a two-story frame structure (gone in the 1930 Sanborn map). The one-story frame building has three vehicle bays, a poured concrete foundation and floor, a metal-sheathed gable roof with weatherboarding in the gables, and a brick veneer dating to about 1980. A gravel driveway ends in a circle in front of the building.

The lot itself preserves many historic features. Running along the Nelson Street sidewalk is a limestone retaining wall capped with large stones. A historic gate and set of limestone steps at the south end of this wall, at the corner of the post office property, has recent iron gates. A carefully shaped limestone mounting block formerly stood near this gate; it now serves as a sundial base and stands in the yard at the north end of the lot. Near the north end of the retaining

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wall are reconstructed stone gate posts flanking the driveway entrance, one set with a bronze plaque reading "Evergreen House." A brick walkway follows the narrow strip of property along the southwest side of the post office to a set of small limestone steps on Lee Avenue. Other features include a massive flat boulder with a bowl-like surface identified as an aboriginal corn mill.

During the restoration deteriorated brick walks were replaced with carefully designed forty-inch-wide walkways laid with some 10,000 pavers. When the City of Lexington decided to pave the property's Nelson Street sidewalk, the present owners contributed \$2,500 for the bricks. A line of old boxwood separates the front of the property's Nelson Street exposure from the area behind, and other old box accent the brick walks. Tree species include sugar maple (an old specimen), mimosa, deodar cedar, red oak, redbud, crabapple, flowering cherry, Chinese golden raintree, magnolia, dogwood, ginkgo, ash, walnut, river birch, and Bradford pear. Three-quarters of the trees were planted by the present owners over the last quarter of a century. During the 1980s over fifty old English boxwood were lost to a fungus infection that has struck boxwood throughout Lexington.

Integrity Statement

The Reid-White-Philbin House possesses excellent integrity. The three principal sections of the house are clearly differentiated and none obscures the exterior character-defining features of the others. Those character-defining features--porches, the decorative front entry, windows, gable parapets, and so forth--are all present and accounted for. The interior underwent considerable change during the third quarter of the twentieth century when the residence was converted into a fraternity house, and some historic features such as the stair and several doors were altered or removed. However, these deficiencies were corrected during a restoration carried out by the present owners with the support of the Historic Lexington Foundation, which holds an easement on the property. The immediate and general surroundings also possess a high degree of integrity. An antebellum brick dependency which served in part as a slave dwelling among other uses survives, as does a ca. 1910 carriage house, although the latter has been altered. The yard preserves its nineteenth-century character, with shade trees, plantings of yucca and boxwood, and stone walls and steps--much as depicted in an 1867-70 photograph. The property is located in one of the least-altered sections of the Lexington Historic District, and hence the general surroundings retain their historic character.

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Section number 8 Page 9

NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Summary

The Reid-White-Philbin House occupies a special place in the history of Lexington, Virginia. The substantial Federal-style brick house was begun in 1821 for Samuel McDowell Reid, who was locally influential in politics, economic development, and education. Reid designed the house, and his surviving watercolor elevation and section drawings provide a rare testament to the accomplishment of an antebellum Virginia "gentleman architect." The house is distinguished by an innovative plan, with the downstairs rooms and stair hall radiating off of an entry hall, and by such embellishments as an Ionic entry porch and Federal- and Georgian-inspired mantels. Also of architectural note are the stone kitchen wing--a preexisting house dating to the second half of the eighteenth century--a ca. 1847 side wing with tiered portico, and an antebellum brick dependency which served in part as a slave quarter.

Samuel McDowell Reid succeeded his father as Clerk of the County Court in 1831 and he involved himself in the economic development of his community, but his primary significance lies in his long-term efforts on behalf of local education. He was a founder or trustee of several Lexington institutions, and he served as a trustee of Washington College (the present Washington and Lee University) for half a century until his death in 1869. It was in this latter capacity that Reid played a role in recruiting Robert E. Lee for the presidency of Washington College, an important event in the history of the college and its host community. Lee spent his first days at Lexington in Reid's house. After Reid's death the property passed to his daughter Mary Louise White, wife of Washington and Lee Greek professor James Jones White, and the house remained in the Reid family until 1959 when it was sold and converted into a fraternity house by the Kappa Alpha Order. In 1975 present owners Brigadier General Tobias R. Philbin, Jr. and Anne S. Philbin began a rehabilitation that has restored the house to its antebellum grandeur.

Applicable Criteria

The Reid-White-Philbin House, which is a contributing resource in the Lexington Historic District (listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places), is individually eligible for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a substantial, sophisticated, and well preserved residence exhibiting Federal, Georgian, and Greek Revival influences, and for the survival of conceptual designs and specifications drawn by Samuel McDowell Reid, the original owner and architect. The property is also eligible under Criterion B in the area of education for its association with Reid, whose many and varied contributions to the Lexington educational community over half a century included involvement in recruiting Robert E. Lee for the presidency of Washington College. The period of significance

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Statement of Significance (continued)

for the property extends from ca. 1750, the rough beginning date of the architectural evolution of the house, through 1869, the year of Samuel McDowell Reid's death. The property is eligible at the local level of significance. Information in support of designation appears throughout the historic context.

Acknowledgments

A number of individuals and organizations assisted in the preparation of this report. Foremost among these were the owners of the property and the nomination's sponsors, Brigadier General Tobias R. Philbin, Jr. and Anne S. Philbin, who were also authors of the Preliminary Information Form that formed the basis for this report. Others who provided assistance included Lisa McCown and C. Vaughan Stanley of the Leyburn Library Special Collections at Washington and Lee University, and Anne Beckett, June Ellis, John Kern, and Marc Wagner of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Historic Context

The architectural evolution of the Reid-White-Philbin House begins with the construction of the original stone wing sometime during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The land on which the house stands was deeded to Samuel McClure by its original owner Benjamin Borden in 1752--a date some historians take as the construction date of the stone wing--and from 1760 to 1782 it was owned by the Campbell family, the owners of one of Lexington's earliest documented buildings (the former Jordan House on N. Main St., demolished in 1940). In 1788 the land was purchased by John Hopkins (d. ca. 1809), who is known from an 1819 deed to have lived on the property, presumably in the stone wing. David and Ann Hopkins, John's son and daughter-in-law, sold the house and slightly over one acre to Samuel McDowell Reid in April 1821 for \$750. In April 1821 and August 1822 Reid purchased two adjoining parcels of .42 and 1.5 acres for \$100 and \$175. The 1822 purchase refers to "Reid's lot on which his house stands."¹

Samuel McDowell Reid (1790-1869), the son of first Rockbridge County court clerk Andrew Reid, soon began planning for a major building campaign. By the end of October 1821 he had

¹ McClung, "Home of Doctor Reid White Jr.," Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 7-10; and Rockbridge County Deed Book M, pp. 60, 413, and 511, and Deed Book N, p. 260.

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Reid-White-Philbin House
Lexington, Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

drafted specifications for a two-story brick house and had contracted with an English-born indentured-servant-turned-carpenter Edward Sewell to provide "carpenters labour" in its construction. Local builders Jordan & Darst may have executed the brickwork; they are known to have built one neighboring brick house during the same period and are believed to have built others. Completion of Reid's house is reflected in 1824 property tax records, which note "Buildings \$1784.12 cents added," although in actuality the house is likely to have been substantially completed by August 1822. Reid's desire to build the house reflects in part the fact that he had recently married Sarah E. Hare (1800-1839), the daughter of local attorney William B. Hare, in 1820. The adjoining parcels bought by him in 1821 and 1822 extend downhill towards Woods Creek behind the house. They were probably purchased to provide back lots for gardens and outbuildings; the latter appear in the location on maps from 1877 and 1907.²

Samuel McDowell Reid rose to a position of prominence in his community during the antebellum period. Upon the death of his father in 1837 Reid acquired the Mulberry Hill plantation located a short distance west of Lexington, although he continued to live at his in-town residence until his death. By the mid-1840s he had acquired nearly 1,500 acres in Rockbridge County, and several years later he owned buildings worth \$5,000 in downtown Lexington. He succeeded his father as Clerk of the County Court in 1831, a post he held until 1856 when he began a two-year stint as Clerk of the Circuit Court. He was a director of the James River and Kanawha Canal and was instrumental in extending the navigation works up the Maury River to Lexington. "The Squire of Rockbridge County" (as Washington and Lee historian Ollinger Crenshaw referred to him) won election to the Virginia General Assembly in 1859 and served through the war years as a member of the banking committee. Reid was a founder of the Bank of Rockbridge and the Rockbridge County Fair (its antebellum incarnation); he was a treasurer of the local Sons of Temperance League; and he built a profitable legal practice over the course of his career.³

² Philbin and Philbin, "Reid-White House;" Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 78-79; and 1907 Sanborn map. Oddly, Rockbridge County tax records do not record any value of buildings for Reid's lots before 1823, nor do they record buildings on the property when it belonged to previous owners. However, this may be explained by the fact that local assessors had only begun to value buildings separately from land in 1820, and lapses may have occurred in implementation of the new system.

³ Philbin and Philbin, "Reid-White House;" Nexsen, "Mulberry Hill," 1-2; *Lexington Gazette*, September 22, 1869; "Samuel McDowell Reid;" Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, 90-

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Reid played an important role in the educational life of Lexington, a community known for its commitment to higher education, then as now. In 1810 he was a student at Washington College, where his father served as a trustee, and nine years later he himself was made a trustee. He held this position for fifty years, nine of them as secretary of the board of trustees. Washington College, established in 1749 as Augusta Academy, moved to a site near Lexington in the 1780s and to its present location in the first decade of the nineteenth century. The school's "foundations lay in the Presbyterian Scotch-Irish respect for education and their demand for an educated clergy." By Reid's day the institution had begun to grow and prosper, achieving official legislative designation as a college in 1813. As Reid gained seniority on the board he took charge of the school's finances and he particularly interested himself in its architectural development. In the early 1840s he initiated a building campaign that transformed the central campus buildings into a harmonious Greek Revival ensemble, an appearance they preserve to the present day.⁴

Reid's educational work was not confined to Washington College. He was a trustee of the Ann Smith Academy, a girls classical school located across Nelson Street from his house, and he helped found the Franklin Society in 1816, a debate society that also provided its community with one of the nation's first lending libraries. The Society built its library and reading room in front of Reid's House at the corner of Nelson and Jefferson streets. Rooms in the Society's building were rented out for various private schools. Reid served at the Society's first president under its charter, and at the time of his death he was its oldest member. In a eulogy the membership recalled that he had "always recognized the value of the Franklin Society as an instrument for advancing the interest of the community."⁵

Samuel McDowell Reid's house and his alma mater both directly experienced the effects of the Civil War. The house was occupied by a Union general during Hunter's Raid in June 1864, and

91; *Rockbridge County, Virginia, Heritage Book*, 36; Boley, *Lexington in Old Virginia*, 174; and Rockbridge County land books (property tax records).

⁴ Philbin and Philbin, "Reid-White House;" Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 145-57.

⁵ Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, 90-91; Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 17-18, 27, 87, and 284; Philbin and Philbin, "Reid-White House;" and *Lexington Gazette*, September 22, 1869. Reid was also a founder of the Graham Philosophical Society.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Washington College was vandalized during the same action--but compared with Lexington's other institution of higher learning, Virginia Military Institute (VMI), which was burned, Washington College escaped relatively unscathed. The indirect effects of the war were more profound. College operations were practically brought to a halt during hostilities, and afterwards the trustees contended with deteriorated facilities, failing enrollment, and the prospect of insufficient donations from an impoverished South. In response the trustees hatched a bold scheme. Without any prior contact Samuel McDowell Reid and his fellow trustees elected the popular former Confederate General Robert E. Lee president of the college in early August 1865, and to their delighted surprise Lee accepted the position.⁶

Lee arrived in Lexington on September 18 and was choosing his lodgings when Samuel McDowell Reid's son-in-law J. J. White spotted him. As Lee's son (and future Washington and Lee president) Robert E. Lee Jr. later wrote:

"Professor White, who had just turned into the main street as the General halted in front of the hotel, said he knew in a moment that this stately rider on the iron-gray charger must be General Lee. He, therefore, at once went forward, as two or three old soldiers gathered around to help the General down, and insisted on taking him to the home of Colonel Reid, the professor's father-in-law, where he had already been invited to stay."

James Jones White (1828-94) had been hired to teach Greek at Washington College in 1852 and had married Reid's daughter Mary Louise (1832-1901) in 1858. "A personage in his own right in both college and community," according to Crenshaw, White had led a company of college students--the Liberty Hall Volunteers--into battle under Lee's command but had returned to Lexington for health reasons early in the war and had struggled with three other professors to keep the college afloat as a preparatory school. White and Reid undoubtedly saw Lee's visit as something of a coup. Lee probably considered his host's home a sanctuary from the throngs that would undoubtedly call upon him at a public house--adoration that he found personally embarrassing and that he feared might lead to pro-Confederate incidents.⁷

⁶ Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 215-18; Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 157-58.

⁷ Lee, *Recollections of General Lee*, 184-85; Crenshaw, *General Lee's College*, 89; and Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 226-29.

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Lexington, Va.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

Lee spent several days as "the guest of our worthy and well known townsman, Col. S. McD. Reid," reported the *Lexington Gazette*. According to tradition he was given the second-floor west bedroom in the 1821 section of the house. His first morning at the Reids' Lee wrote to his wife Mary Custis that he was "comfortably quartered," but that he was unaccustomed to the chilly nighttime mountain air. "Last night I found a blanket and coverlid rather light covering, and this morning I see a fire in the dining-room." On September 20 Lee met with the trustees and then left for Rockbridge Baths for relaxation and to treat his rheumatism. He had written Mary that "as the Colonel has a large family . . . I fear I am intruding upon his hospitality," and consequently when he returned to Lexington for his installation as president on October 2 he collected his belongings at the Reids' and checked into a hotel. Lee likely continued to pay social calls on the Reids.⁸

The Washington College trustees regarded Lee "as a magnet for attracting both students and financial gifts," according to Lee biographer Charles Bracelan Flood, but the General saw himself as something other than a compliant cash cow. Lee had been a superintendent of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point before the war, and he took his responsibilities as an educator seriously. By the end of October 1865 he proposed moving away from the "classics-steeped" tradition of antebellum Southern schooling towards a more practical focus on agricultural and technological training. Flood has summarized:

"Under Lee's guidance, the thrust of his reorganization would result in ten new departments, expanded graduate studies, and a range of special programs and offerings . . . that would make the school one of the most innovative in the nation."

By Lee's death in 1870 he "was entitled to a position in the first rank of American educators, without reference to his military past," according to Flood. But as Flood also noted, Lee's ambitious plans required ambitious fund-raising, and he was obliged to market his fame for the benefit of his institution. As the school's senior trustee and financial planner, Samuel McDowell Reid participated in this profitable endeavor. Robert E. Lee's association with Washington College--to which his name was added after his death--brought success to the school and fame

⁸ *Lexington Gazette*, September 20, 1865; Lee, *Recollections of General Lee*, 184-86; Philbin and Philbin, "Reid-White House;" and Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, 228-29.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

to Lexington.⁹

Samuel McDowell Reid died on September 15, 1869. Robert E. Lee numbered among his pall bearers, and former state governor John Letcher eulogized him as the "perfect model of the old Virginia gentleman." Many of Reid's former slaves attended his funeral. The Reid-White-Philbin House passed to Reid's eldest daughter, Mary Louise White. Upon White's death in 1901 the property passed to her three children, but in 1906 one of the heirs, physician Reid White Sr. (1868-1931), acquired his brother and sister's interests and became sole owner. Dr. White was appointed post surgeon at VMI in the 1890s, and it is said that "the quality and length of his medical service to Lexington and Rockbridge County for over half a century is still remembered." Dr. White's son, Reid White, Jr. (1900-58), also practiced medicine. After Reid, Jr.'s death the property was sold to the Fraternity Housing Corporation in 1959 for use by the Washington and Lee chapter of the Kappa Alpha Order. A kitchen addition was made to the rear of the ca. 1847 wing and the interior was subdivided into numerous small bedrooms and suffered other alterations. The property's decline was reversed in January 1975 when present owners Brigadier General Tobias R. Philbin, Jr. and *Baltimore Evening Sun* columnist Anne S. Philbin acquired the house and 2.5 acres. The Historic Lexington Foundation, established in 1966, acquired a preservation easement on the house exterior and grounds as a part of the transfer. The Philbins commenced a careful restoration of the house to its nineteenth-century appearance, and today the Reid-White-Philbin House stands as one of the town's better-known historic landmarks.¹⁰

Architectural Discussion

The Reid-White-Philbin House attracts the attention of architectural historians because of its refinement and state of preservation, but also because of the detailed set of original elevation, plan, and section drawings that survive for it. Samuel McDowell Reid's sprightly watercolor renderings have been featured on the dust jacket of *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*

⁹ Flood, *Lee, The Last Years*, 98, 103, and 111-13.

¹⁰ *Lexington Gazette*, September 22, 1869; Philbin and Philbin, "Reid-White House;" Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 289; Reid-White House file at Leyburn Library, Washington and Lee; and Rockbridge County Deed Book 252, p. 463, and Deed Book 345, p. 682. The Philbins gave the alternate name Evergreen House to the property.

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Statement of Significance (continued)

(1977), the cover of the exhibition catalogue *Architectural Drawing in Lexington, 1779-1926* (1978), and in *The Making of Virginia Architecture* (1992). The authors of the latter publication note Reid's "unusual proficiency for an amateur" and his "interest in detail" as displayed by the careful delineation of treatments such as window apron panels and corner blocks that served to differentiate the hierarchy of interior spaces (the apron panels, incidentally, were not executed). They point to Owen Biddle's *Young Carpenter's Assistant* (1810) as a possible inspiration for the home's front elevation, but conclude that "the house is more typical of the provincial Federal idiom of the region" ("provincial" being a term attached to Virginia houses west of the Blue Ridge).¹¹

Reid's promotion of learning and intellectual pursuits included an interest in architecture. His contribution to the classical remodeling of Washington College has been covered above. In 1838 Reid served on the three-member building committee charged with contracting for a new county jail. The committee tapped Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter for the project, and several years later Walter was called upon to design the Lexington Presbyterian Church--Reid again a member of the building committee responsible for choosing the nationally prominent architect, who later designed the U. S. Capitol dome. The Greek Revival style used by Walter in Lexington characterizes Reid's ca. 1847 addition to his own house.¹²

The house underwent several alterations during the mid- and late nineteenth century. Wide doorways were inserted in the walls between three of the downstairs rooms, probably during the middle decades of the century as the style of their surrounds suggests. Similar openings were built into the design of most gracious houses of the era, and the ones in the Reid house were presumably added to better adapt it for entertaining. An insight into this is provided in a letter written by a Washington College student in January 1869:

¹¹ Brownell et al, *Making of Virginia Architecture*, 256-57. From Franklin Society library lending records it is known that Reid perused Biddle's *Carpenter's Assistant* in 1835 (Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 282). The house was also recorded in plan, elevation, section, and detail drawings by a team from the University of Virginia architecture and engineering program in 1970 under the auspices of The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and the Historic American Buildings Survey, resulting in its inclusion in the *Virginia Catalog*.

¹² Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 24. The addition is referred to as recently completed in an 1847 letter in the Reid Family Papers.

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Reid-White-Philbin House
Lexington, Va.

Statement of Significance (continued)

"During [Christmas] week, Mrs. Mary Lou White gave a 'Smashin' party, which was considered the party of the season. About one hundred were invited and all went and you can imagine the jam it was in those small rooms."

Whether the reference to small rooms implies that the openings had not yet been made or whether the openings were insufficient for their intended purpose is not known. Another refinement of the era or slightly later is the conservatory added to the end of the ca. 1847 addition, an occasional feature of larger Victorian homes in the region, especially during the 1870s and 1880s. The conservatory's bay window provided south light for growing plants, and additional windows on the northwest wall (now gone) looked out onto a rose garden. Samuel McDowell Reid was a reader of gardening books, and his daughters undoubtedly shared his interest. The result of Reid's enthusiasm for gardening and architecture is a distinguished historic property that was chosen to illustrate the Lexington Historic District in the 1986 edition of *The Virginia Landmarks Register*.¹³

¹³ Boley, *Lexington in Old Virginia*, 126-27; Lyle and Simpson, *Architecture of Historic Lexington*, 282.

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Lexington, Va.**

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel corresponds to City of Lexington Tax Map 16 parcel ((2)) A & C. The parcel includes a narrow strip approximately six or seven feet in width that connects it to Lee Avenue.

Boundary Justification

The nomination boundaries correspond to the present property lines for the parcel on which the house and its associated historic resources stand.

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Lexington, Va.

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PHOTOGRAPHS

1. 1. Subject: Reid-White-Philbin House (same for all photos)
 2. Location: Lexington, Va. (same for all photos)
 3. Photographer: J. Daniel Pezzoni (same for all photos)
 4. Photo date: February 2000 (same for all photos)
 5. Original negative (VDHR # 17920) archived at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond (same for all photos)
 6. Description of view: Front (southeast) elevation with 1821 section in the foreground and the ca. 1847 addition behind. View looking west.
 7. Photograph number appears at beginning of entry (same for all photos)
2. 6. Rear elevation view showing the original stone house and (on the right) the gable end of the dependency. View looking south.
3. 6. Mantel on the second floor of the original stone house.
4. 6. Drawing room view with the east corner room visible through the doorway.
5. 6. Mantel in the second-floor "Lee Bedroom."

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Reid-White-Philbin House
Lexington, Va.



Exhibit A: Front elevation and sections of the Reid-White-Philbin House by Samuel McDowell Reid, 1821. For the sections Reid used a graphic convention that may be confusing to modern eyes. The sections appear to show a house with a rear wing; in fact, all four interior elevations are depicted, with each pair of sections connected at the corners.

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Reid-White-Philbin House
Lexington, Va.

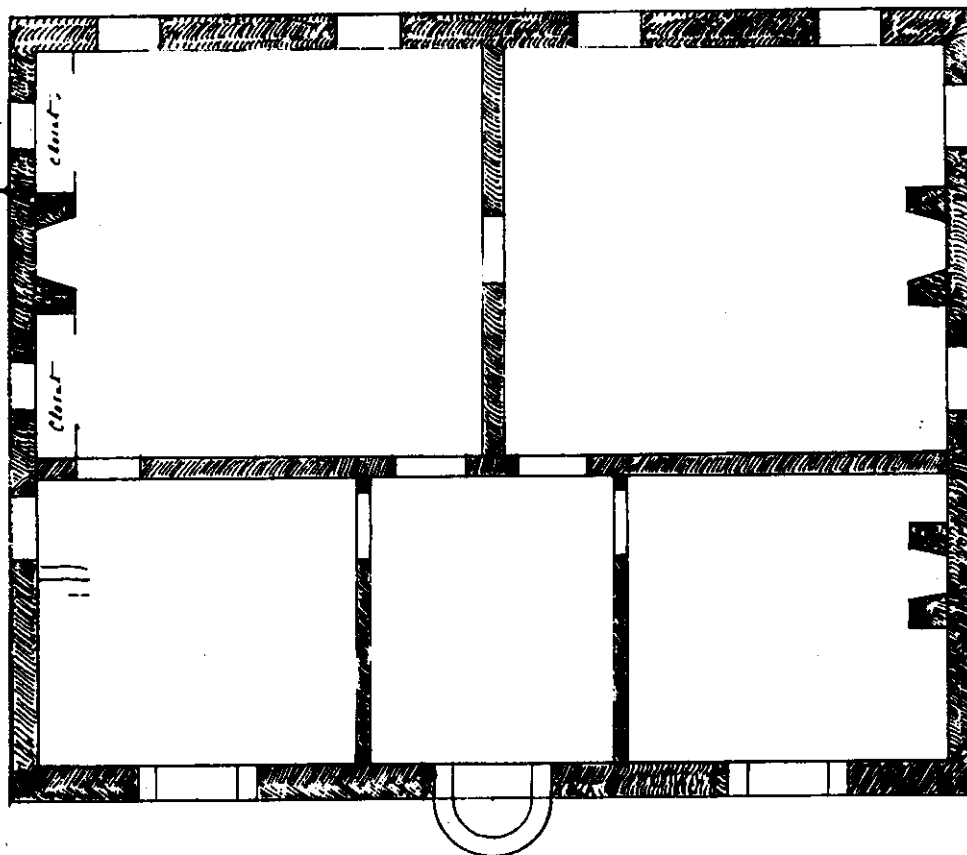
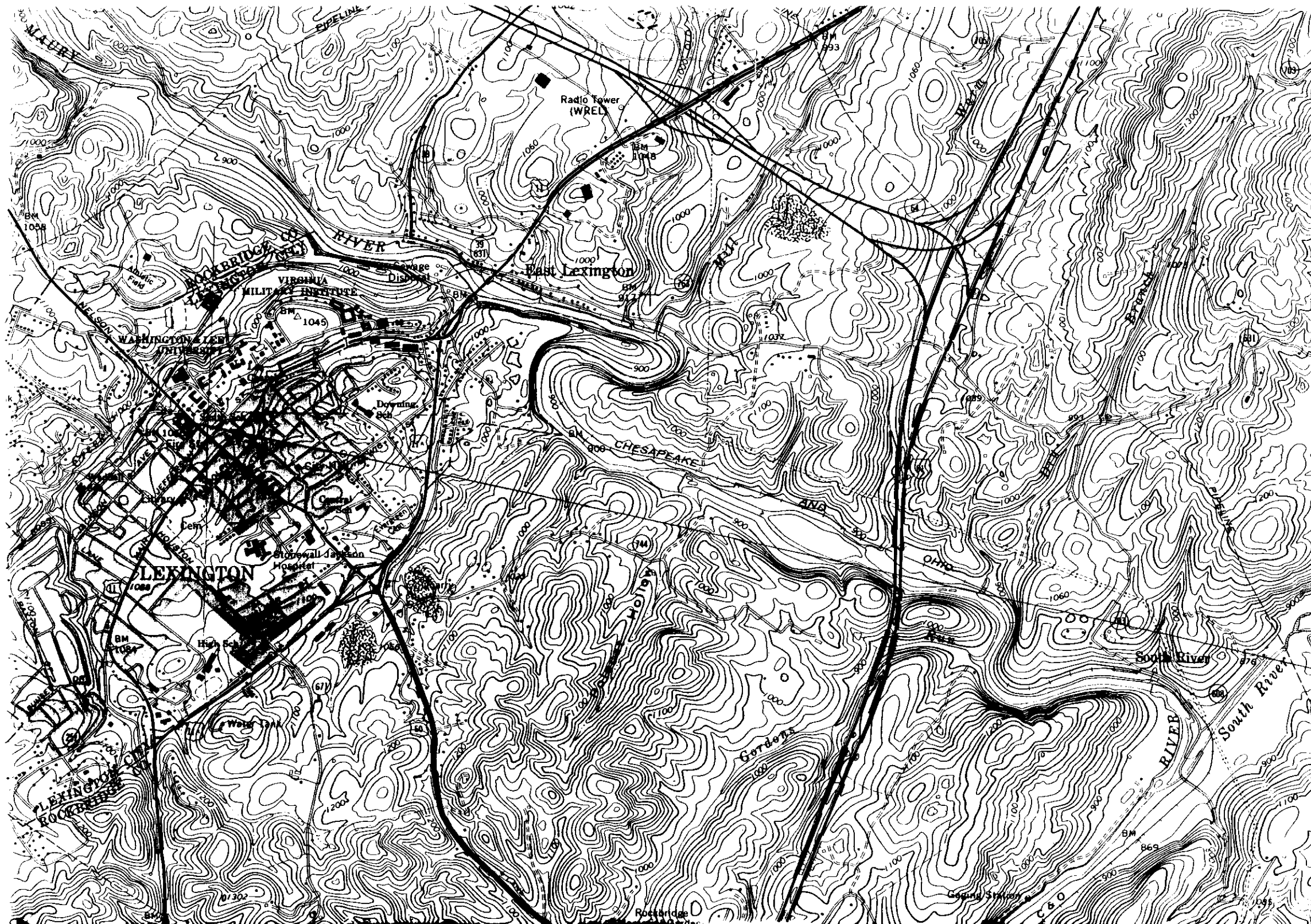


Exhibit B: First floor plan of the Reid-White-Philbin House by Samuel McDowell Reid, 1821.



4185

4184

47'30"

4183

LEXINGTON
U.S.G.S.

4182

Reid-White-
Philbin House
Lexington, VA
UTM ref. (zone 17)
1. E636860 N4182950
! DHR # 117-0014

4181